HIT Policy Committee

NHIN Workgroup Recommendations
Phase 2

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Nationwide Health Information Network

- Workgroup's Definition of the NHIN

    A set of policies, standards and services that enable the Internet to be used for secure and meaningful exchange of health information to improve health and health care.

- NHIN Workgroup Charge

    To create a set of recommendations for a policy and technical framework for the NHIN in a way that is both open to all and fosters innovation.
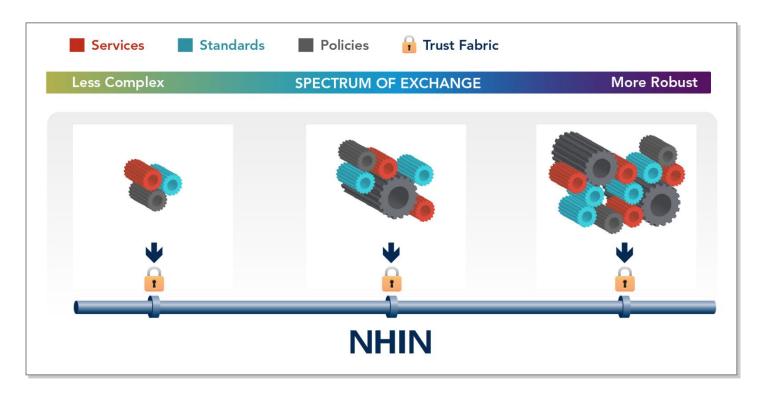
Workgroup Context

- Meaningful use criteria in the proposed CMS rule require exchange of health information among providers and with patients to improve quality, safety, and efficiency of care, patient engagement, coordination of care, and population health.

- Stage 1 criteria involve direct communication of patient data among providers (e.g. doctor to consultant, lab to doctor, doctor to pharmacy) and with patients where:
  - the exchange is for treatment or payment purposes;
  - the sender and receiver are known; but
  - the sender may or may not have a prior relationship with the recipient.

- The NHIN should support achievement of Meaningful Use in 2011 and beyond.

NHIN Workgroup: Phases of Activity

- Phase 1 (1/13) – identify key elements
- Phase 2 (2/17) – role of enabling organizations and related functions/services
- Phase 3 (3/18) – identity proofing and authentication
- Phase 4 (April) – directories
- Phase 5 (June) – trust fabric
- Phase 6 (September) – governance

Continuing Evolution:
Broadening the Use of The NHIN

- ONC recognizes a broad range of exchange needs – including simple, local applications and more robust exchanges with federal agencies or large nationwide entities

- To date, development has focused on supporting more COMPLEX exchanges

- Work is under way to establish minimum requirements for local applications (e.g., local providers utilizing e-prescribing services)

- No matter the level of exchange, a trust fabric is essential

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General Working Assumptions

- Should not interfere with information exchange taking place today.
- Over time, information exchange should be broadened to foster existing and new exchanges, to support increased interoperability, while strengthening privacy and security.
    - Need to be cognizant and supportive of state-level and enterprise-level information exchange.
- The work for 2011 should not inhibit more robust information exchange in 2013 and 2015.
- Need to recognize common elements of a trust fabric that expand across the spectrum of information exchange – for 2011, 2013, 2015 and beyond.

Phase 1: 1/13/10

KEY ELEMENTS

Phase 1: Key Findings

- Key elements that need to be in place to facilitate and encourage the broadest range of providers (individuals and organizations) to be able to achieve meaningful use in 2011:
  - Secure Internet transport.
  - Addressing and associated directories to allow parties to definitively route information to the intended participant.
  - Means to authenticate/validate identity of parties involved in information exchange.
  - Trust fabric that provides parties with sufficient confidence that the exchange can be accomplished successfully.

Phase 2: 2/17/10

ROLE AND FUNCTION OF ENABLING ORGANIZATIONS – *WITHIN A TRUST FRAMEWORK*

Findings – Standards and Services

- A set of services and technical specifications should enable a provider to transport information over the Internet in a secure and trustworthy way.

- The focus should be on well-established standards for secure transport.

- The technical and policy recommendations need to support interoperability between simple and more complex information exchange models.

- The Workgroup is investigating the types of technical requirements that may be needed.

Findings - Policies for Confidence Assurance

- A trust framework is needed to ensure that enabling organizations handle data reliably, properly assure identities and act appropriately with respect to data they handle.

- This work will address the mechanisms needed for transparency, oversight, accountability, redress, and enforcement with respect to enabling organizations.

- Need to assess whether there is a need for national policy for confidence assurance at the end-user level.

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Findings – Role of Government

- Government plays in integral role in assuring trust, and ensuring privacy and security of health information.
- Government plays a key role in:
  - Identifying the simple standards and services needed for Stage 1 meaningful use.
  - Assuring that the services are available if not now being offered.
  - Increasing interoperability.
- We aim for the least governmental intervention necessary to accomplish these purposes – and no more.

Workgroup Phase 2: Recommendation Topics

1. Policies needed for less complex exchange
2. Technical capabilities
3. Role and function of enabling organizations
4. Role of government

Recommendation #1:
Policies Needed for Less Complex Exchange

- There is a need for a core set of policies to support less complex exchange related to:
  - Provider identity and addressing
  - Provider authentication and identity assurance
  - Secure information sharing
  - Secure information routing
- There should be coordination of policies between state HIE efforts and the NHIN.
- The NHIN Workgroup will explore these further in coordination with the Privacy and Security and Health Information Exchange Workgroups.

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Recommendation #2: Technical Capabilities

- There is a need for a core set of services and specifications that can be implemented by enabling organizations in support of Stage 1 meaningful use requirements.
    - Provider addressing
    - Provider authentication and identity assurance
    - Secure information sharing
    - Secure information routing
    - Directory services

- These should be coordinated with the state-level efforts.

- Pilots and demonstrations should be used, where possible, to inform the standards, services and specifications.

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Recommendation #3:
Role of Enabling Organizations

- The services could be provided by organizations of various types, including health systems and IDNs, vendors, HIOs, HIE service providers (HSPs), etc.

- There may be other mechanisms to accomplish these functions; consequently, enabling organizations may not be needed in all information exchange models.

- Need to explore the issues regarding certification of enabling organizations.

Recommendation #4: Role of Government

- Establish and maintain a framework of trust, including ensuring adequate privacy and security protections to enable electronic health information exchange.

- Government may need to create structures/incentives to enable information exchange where trust or necessary standards / services do not exist.

- Limit intervention where information exchange with providers currently exists – to the extent possible.

- Create incentives to improve interoperability, privacy and security of information exchange.

- Support real-world testing and validation of the services and specifications to verify scalability on a nationwide basis.